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Final Paper-Fahrenheit 451

**Censorship**

In Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury depicted a story of a government controlled society. The most prominent theme in this story was censorship. Censorship is used to control the society by not allowing the people to think for themselves. The people in this society were banned from reading and even owning books. If the people were caught with books they were arrested and the books were burned. If they refused to leave their belongings the people were burned along with their home and books. In the society the people were cold and their personalities had no character. They seemed depressed, angry, and even bored. Each of them were consumed by the technology that surrounded them so much so that they quickly became unaware of one of the most important tools in their possession.

In my collage I chose images that I thought best represented the main theme in the story, censorship. There are three main categories of images that explain the different types of censorship in the story. A thoughts and ideas category contain images of a “censored” brain, a sign that reads “open democracy-no free thinking for the world”, and a sign stating “corrupting the minds of the youth one philosopher at a time”. The images in the knowledge group are books burning, a locked book, and pictures of censored books and censored pages in books. Control is another category that contains images of “censored-free speech now”, a man with a censor over his mouth, a red angry face with a covered mouth, a lady whispering in an ear, hands covering a person’s face, internet and music censors, and the word explicit.

The category for thoughts and ideas represent how the society viewed scholars, writers and others that wanted to think for themselves, as a threat. Like Clarisse for instance, was curious about the world around her. She tried to help Montag to see how life just rushed by if you let it. By not allowing society to read books the government kept people from imagining how life could be. Instead they were satisfied with the way things were because they didn’t know any better. The people in the government didn’t want society to have an upper hand and wanted to keep them from being individuals, starting conflict, or having different views. They did so by feeding the people of the town information through the media. Mildred, Mrs. Bowles, and Mrs. Phelps were watching a wall sized TV and Montag entered speaking of a poem. The women were scared, yet curious. Could you imagine being afraid to read because if you did you could die?

In Fahrenheit 451 Guy Montag was the protagonist and one of several firemen that helped keep “order in the town”, so to speak, by burning books and homes. In present day the firemen help society by putting out fires, but Montag, Beatty, and their coworkers seemed to get a kind of fulfillment in doing the exact opposite. The burned, locked, and censored books and the “lack of knowledge” article in my collage symbolize how society kept knowledge and information from the people. They also represent the actual act of burning the books. The firemen that were supposed to be community helpers were actually community betrayers.

The story mainly depicted censorship through power and force. Many of the images I chose for my collage show a sense of control by a more powerful source. The image of the lady whispering in an ear, portrayed government and society telling people how to feel and what to think. The word explicit and the music and internet sensor showed that even the media was controlled. The man with a censor over his mouth, the red face with his mouth covered, and the face with three hands on it showed that people cannot even say what they choose to say without ridicule. People do not get to choose what is best for themselves on their own. It is already done for them by a higher authority. Just like in the story the government, society, and the firemen controlled what all of the people thought, heard, and saw by not allowing them to use their own imagination. Because of this the people were unhappy. They were so unhappy in fact that not having books became the root to Montag killing his boss and friend as well as his coworkers, Mildred turning Montag in for having books. It also led to many angry scared people in a town with very little knowledge and trust.

Censorship today is not quite as harsh as it is in the futuristic story Fahrenheit 451 but it is still in existence. People today also rely more on gadgets and media to help them on a daily basis rather than books. In my collage I also included a book of matches that read “Censorship is a free society - It’s a bad match”. This quote had an impact on my thoughts about censorship. With it the society is really not completely free, but without a little censorship the world may become to corrupt. Many of the things that we see and do on a daily basis are censored. Censorship in America seems unreal because Americans pride themselves on freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Without these values upheld and the knowledge we obtain from reading books we become the society from Fahrenheit 451. I can’t imagine an America without the freedom to express anything and everything, or an America without knowledge.